



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/19

AUDIT COMMITTEE 4th February 2019	AGENDA ITEM NO. 6
REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES	STAFF SURVEY (WHISTLEBLOWING AND ANTI- FRAUD POLICY REPORTING AWARENESS)

Author: Richard Evans (Director of Human Resources)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Audit Committee with the outcomes of the recent staff survey that aimed to assess general awareness of the Council's whistleblowing and anti-fraud arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members acknowledge the positive steps taken to assess staff awareness of the whistleblowing, and anti-fraud arrangements in place.
- 2.2 Officers use the outcomes from the staff survey in order to target resources at areas identified that could improve the arrangements further.
- 2.3 Following consideration of the outcomes from the survey, Members identify any additional areas for improvement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To help ensure that Audit Committee is able to use the outcomes of the staff survey when delivering its Terms of Reference in respect of promoting a culture of openness and probity across the Council.

4. AUDIT COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 4.1 The Audit Committee Terms of Reference (Point H) requires it to *'Promote and review any measures designed to raise the profile of probity within the Authority.'*
- 4.2 In line with this requirement, this report provides Committee with the outcomes of the recent staff survey, along with the proposed next steps.

5. RESULTS OF THE WHISTLEBLOWING AND ANTI-FRAUD SECTION OF THE 2018 STAFF CONSULTATION

5.1 2018 STAFF SURVEY

This report focuses on the 2018 staff survey results regarding whistleblowing and anti-fraud reporting, as if these policies are to be effective, it is important that staff are aware of them and utilise them effectively. The survey was conducted between November – December 2018 and for Members information also included questions about the Council's quality improvement processes (this element being outside of scope for the specific purposes of this report).

5.2 METHODOLOGY

The survey hyperlink was distributed to staff by email and Human Resources staff visited various locations across the Council with computer tablets to capture responses from staff who did not have access to email. SNAP survey software was used to analyse quantitative data and to produce graphs.

Please note that due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. The analysis of the qualitative data, which included 'open' responses, for example, answers to questions such as 'any other comments', was undertaken by identifying key themes while reviewing the responses. Responses were read and coded against identified themes, using as many codes as necessary. Once coded they were inputted into a spreadsheet to record and capture all responses against the coded themes. As this process involved personal interpretation it was subjective, but enabled the data to be summarised for consideration.

5.3 PARTICIPATION

The survey excluded schools and overall, 1,141 participants completed the questionnaire, 528 online and 613 on computer tablets. This is an approximate participation rate of 19% based on a number of 5,994 non-school based staff. All questions were optional.

5.4 SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results have been summarised as follows:

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
1. Do employees feel empowered to speak up when they spot an urgent problem?	69.70%	16.60%	13.70%	1125
2. If you thought a colleague was doing something that appeared to be dishonest such as stealing money, taking advantage of their position or receiving gifts or hospitality, would you know how to report your concerns?	80.60%	8.10%	11.30%	1125
3. Would you feel confident that you would not be the subject of any repercussions from the Council if you reported a concern? Do you think you would feel protected?	58.60%	41.40%	-	1097
4. Do you know of any policies in place within the Council that would guide you on how to deal with any of the issues outlined in the questions above?	58.40%	41.60%	-	1107

5. Have you read any of these policies?	73.10%	26.90%	-	639
--	--------	--------	---	-----

5.5 ACTIONS REQUIRED FOR IMPROVEMENT

ACTION 1

Remind staff of the importance of feeling empowered to report any suspicions that they may have.

ACTION 2

Re-assure staff that they will not be the subject of any repercussions if they come forwards and blow the whistle on a Colleague.

ACTION 3

Devise a simplified communication for staff that summarises the Council's whistleblowing and anti-fraud arrangements. Also, recommunicate to staff where full copies of the Policies can be found.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The provision of information in respect of the Council's whistleblowing and anti-fraud arrangements supports the Council in demonstrating compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.
- 9.2 Regulation 7 (Internal Audit) of Part 3 of the 2018 Regulations directs that: "A relevant body must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control."

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 10.1 The work in relation to probity aims to support the delivery of the priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan – *The Way Ahead*, in particular 'Living Within Our Means' through ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place to effectively manage resources.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.2 The Sustainable Development Principles, in particular Prevention, can be applied to the systematic reviews undertaken in order to provide assurance that risk associated with potential misappropriation are being managed.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Council has arrangements in place in respect of whistleblowing and reporting concerns around tackling fraud. The results of the staff survey are positive in respect of general awareness of the arrangements in place, but it has identified a small number of areas where we can look to improve our arrangements further.

Other Information:-*Relevant Scrutiny Committee*

None.

Contact Officer –

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

4th February 2019

**STAFF SURVEY (WHISTLEBLOWING AND ANTI-FRAUD POLICY REPORTING
AWARENESS)**

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Author: Richard Evans (Director of Human Resources)

Item: 6

Background Papers

None.

Officer to contact: Richard Evans